

Residential Sprinkler Requirements

The 2009 International Residential Code (IRC), at section R313, mandates the installation of automatic fire sprinkler systems in new townhouses and in new one- and two-family dwellings.

The compliance date for new townhouses is Jan. 1, 2010. The sprinkler installation requirement for new one- and two-family dwellings takes effect on Jan. 1, 2011.

There are three exceptions to these requirements.

- If a design contract or a construction contract for the construction of these dwellings was signed prior to Dec. 31, 2009, the work will comply with the 2006 International Residential Code.
 - If an application is submitted for a UCC building permit prior to either of the effective dates of the sprinkler requirement, the residential construction will not be subject to it.
 - If and the customer has been offered a sprinkler system and declined, certain floor assemblies that are not required to be fire-resistance rated by the International Residential Code (IRC) shall be provided with a ½-inch gypsum wallboard membrane, 5/8-inch wood structural panel membrane or equivalent on the underside of the floor framing member (35 P.S. § 7210.901(h)(2). per IRC Table 721.6.2(1).
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- New townhouses must be fully sprinkled.
 - Modular homes: must be fully sprinkled, can be installed at the factory or at the job site, all areas in listed in section 2904.1.1 IRC must comply.
 - New manufactured housing units as constructed in the factory and bearing the HUD seal are exempt from compliance with the requirements of the Uniform Construction Code (UCC), but that any work done on site or not addressed in the manufacturer's approved design documentation must satisfy any applicable UCC requirements.
 - For this reason, new manufactured homes delivered from the factory and which are placed on piers or otherwise permanently placed on a lot per the manufacturer's design documentation will not have to meet the sprinkler requirements of the *2009 International Residential Code (IRC)*. However, should the units be placed on a foundation establishing a basement area or any habitable areas as defined in by the UCC, UCC requirements would apply. If only a crawl space is created, and if no fuel-fired appliance is found in the space, this area would not have to have sprinklers.
 - Similarly, when unlive-in manufactured homes are moved from the seller's lot, the homes are not subject to sprinkler requirements, unless they are being placed on a foundation that establishes a basement area or any habitable areas as defined in section